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INFO RUCNCOM/EC CARICOM COLLECTIVE
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UNCLAS SECTION 01 OF 03 BRIDGETOWN 001351

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DEPT FOR WHA/CAR AND DRL
USDOL FOR ILAB
SOUTHCOM ALSO FOR POLAD

E.O. 12958: N/A

TAGS: [ELAB](#) [ECON](#) [PGOV](#) [PREL](#) [BB](#) [XL](#)

SUBJECT: BARBADOS WORKER'S UNION DISPUTE WITH ADM BARBADOS
OVER ALLEGED ILLEGAL FIRING OF WORKERS HEATING UP

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Summary: The Barbados Workers' Union is charging that the AMCIT General Manager, Mr. Jim McCormick, of ADM Barbados has illegally fired local workers and outsourced their positions to contracted illegal Guyanese workers in contravention of local labor and immigration laws. ADM Barbados is the local subsidiary of the ADM corporation and is the largest importer of grain in Barbados. The fired workers have been coming to work every day since Monday October 15th but have been refused entry to the plant. The Union has threatened to take legal action against the company, including trying to revoke the work permit of Mr. McCormick. End Summary

11. Sir Roy Trotman, General Secretary of the Barbados Workers' Union, sent the following letter to Laboff on Friday, October 19.

Begin text:

Dear Mr. Aller

I am aware that part of your duties is to say (sic) on top of US business relations with the people of Barbados generally and particularly with the labour movement.

In this connection and without prejudice, I am giving you early notice that my organization will be requesting the withdrawal of the work permit of the General Manager of the ADM Mills Barbados Limited, Mr. Jim Mc Cormick.

There are several reasons for this, but the ones which are more critical for labour management relations is the company's wilful (sic) breaches of our labour laws, our social partnership protocols, including that of February 1998, promoted by similar disrespect by another American employer (Offshore Keyboard Ltd.), and the blatantly inflammatory action of closing the company's gates to a union official where there is no dispute and refusing to discuss the genuine, legal concerns of employees over attempts to replace them by undocumented Guyanaese surreptitiously being recruited by a rum shop owner for the company. My organization has nothing to hide and will therefore keep

you informed.

Yours sincerely,

Sir Roy Trotman
General Secretary

¶2. Upon receipt of this letter, Laboff looked through the local press and found the following account of the work stoppage in the Nation, the leading daily paper. Begin text;

Mill workers still shut out

Ten employees of ADM Barbados Mills are still shut out of the Spring Garden premises. The men have been showing up for work consistently at 7:30 am until 4:30 pm since Monday on the advice of the Barbados Worker's Union.

Mill Union representative Walter Fenty told the Weekend Nation they were escorted off the premises last Friday. He (Mill Manager Jim McCormick) called us in the office one by one and wanted us to sign a paper but we did not know what we were signing for and we said we were not signing without the union present. "This man is frustrating the workers so we would take action in there, and then he could call the police. We have worked a week and we want our money. The men have children, bills to pay, stated Fenty, a supervisor who has worked for the mill for 15 years. He told the guards to take us to the our lockers and then escort us off the premises. The same work we were doing, he brought in other people to do it," Fenty said, adding their names were no longer on the employee list and they could not go past the guards.

Gregory Babb, acting supervisor and forklift driver said, "we have a contract signed until 2009. Everything was settled. The men just want their week's pay from last week. We have to buy food, Babb said. BWU Assistant General Secretary Clifford Mayers met with the workers earlier this week. We

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are awaiting a meeting with the Labour department (comment: the labour department is the branch of the labor ministry that handles labor management disputes end comment), but the employees have been advised (by the union) to remain on the job." he said. End of newspaper article.

¶3. The Nation, in a headline article titled "Get Him Out" reported October 21, that Sir Roy Trotman sent a letter to the Ministry of Home Affairs asking that Mr. McCormick's work permit be withdrawn. The article quote Sir Roy as saying, "This is sad, but it has become necessary because workers who have been working faithfully for this company have without notice, and though they have done nothing wrong, have found themselves being told they can no longer report to the company for work." Sir Roy added, "They had waited all week on a neighboring spot while they watched people from another country doing the work they once were engaged in." According to the article, 36 workers from the flour warehouse, the feed plant and drivers, have also sent a petition to the Ministry of Home Affairs, saying "they find their current work environment untenable due to the hostility, disharmony and fear that is being experienced daily because of Mr McCormick's attitude.

¶4. The Nation reported on October 23, that ADM and the Union would meet with the Labor Commissioner. Jessie McKinney of the Corporate Communications Department of ADM stated that they would abide by all local laws and regulations. She also stated, "In light of the inaccurate information being circulated, ADM wishes to make it clear that no current employees are locked out of ADM Barbados Mills location."

¶5. Comment: In Barbados the social partnership protocols are taken quite seriously. These protocols date back to the mid 90's when Barbados when through a protracted balance of

payments crisis. The social partnership is a tripartite agreement among labour, unions and business to jointly meet and discuss and resolve labour management issues without going to a strike or other industrial actions. Most of the Barbados major corporations are members of the social partnership.

¶6. The issue of illegal Guyanese workers has been raised recently in the media. The labor union leadership is convinced that corporations are indeed outsourcing labor to illegal Guyanese who are recruited to come to Barbados through the assistance of labor contractors who operate out of ethnic rum shops throughout the island.

¶7. Laboff met with Jim McCormick a few weeks ago. Mr McCormick said that his company would go through a restructuring program in early October, and he did not anticipate any problems as he had discussed it with Sir Roy in person. He also said that the contracted workers would be Guyanese laborers and that ADM stood to save a lot of money on labor costs. End comments

¶8. Laboff spoke with Jim McCormick on Monday October 22, regarding this incident. Mr. McCormick stated that he had followed the letter of the law regarding the dismissal of ten workers. He said that they were unhappy with the severance package. He confirmed that he had hired a Guyanese labor contractor for the replacement workers, but that all the workers hired were local workers, - not Guyanese as he had earlier indicated. ADM will be meeting with the labor commission later this week to try to resolve this situation. The head of the Barbados Employers Federation, ADM company lawyers as well as union representatives, will attend the meeting. Mr. McCormick seemed confident that this situation will work itself out, and indicated that he thought that Sir Roy Trotman was exaggerating the situation for his own political benefit. He promised to provide laboff a readout of the meeting with the labor commission.

¶9. Laboff raised this issue with the labor Permsec during a courtesy call on Monday October 22. The Permsec noted that the case has not yet been forwarded to the labor commissioner's office so he had no official comment. He did say though that if the company had indeed terminated

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employees and replaced them with lower paid employees that sort of action would be frowned upon as in violation of sound industrial relations. Laboff has left a message with Sir Roy Trotman but has not heard back from him.

¶10. Laboff will follow this incident as it unfolds and report back after the labor commission meetings take place later this week.

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